

As The World The Ends Around Us

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Summary: Six and Kat share a moment while the city of New Alexandria is destroyed by the Covenant. Oneshot, Six/Kat.

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Thunder crackled in the distance. Jun looked out over the ruins of the once-mighty city of New Alexandria through binoculars. Emile was scraping his kukri over his armor, providing the only sound; a slight _shick_ that rang sharply through the air. Carter was leaning against a wall, impatiently waiting for the radio to be fixed. And Six just stood there, the silent sentinel of NOBLE; he had never been talkative, but this was quiet, even for him. During moments like this, he'd usually think of some weird joke to tell, or some story, or some such, but now?

Silence.

Absolute, pure, unbroken silence.

He always kept his helmet on, so you could never tell quite what he was thinking, but I had a good idea. During our chats over the radio, he'd told me about Uppercut, about the _6 Echo 2 _disaster, about all of that. I was concerned for the young Lieutenant; according to his file, he wasn't much older than I was, and I was only twenty-two.

"Look at this place," Jun said quietly, his voice hushed, "Used to be the crown jewelâ€¦not anymore." Six huffed, but other than that, stayed silent. Jun looked back at him and said, "Hey, you made it."

"It's a regular family reunion," Emile stated, his voice thick with sarcasm. He and Jorge were practically brothers. Six reached into the

hardcase attached to his hip and pulled out something, which he dropped slightly, catching the chain. Jorge's dog tags.

"Keep 'em," Emile replied to Six's unspoken words." He gave 'em to you. I'll honor him my own way." Six shrugged, and put the tags back into the hardcase. Then silence once reigned once again.

"Jorge always said he would never leave Reach," Jun said. A fit of laughter came from Emile, and he said, "The big man was sentimental."

"He gave his life thinking he just saved the planet. We should all be so lucky." Carter went to stand at the rail next to Jun. The sniper's next question put me in trouble; he asked about two squads that had been involved in the evacuation. Carter turned and looked at me accusingly.

"Those are senior-level communiques!" he growled.

"I hear what I hear," I shrugged, turning to look at the Commander." Problem is, why put Spartans on defensive deployments?"

"I need that link to Sat-com, Kat," he said, shrugging off my question.

"Chasing it," I replied tiredly, "but this console's got more shrapnel in it than transceivers." I stopped working for a moment and looked back at Carter.

"You didn't answer my question."

"You want to know if we're losing."

"I know we're losing. I want to know if we've lost," I replied. I hated the Covenant. More than anything else. They simply slaughtered, and for what point? Some stupid religion? At least humanity didn't kill each other because of religion anymore; or, at least, not very often. Finally, the radio burped with static, but my eyes widened as I saw who was hailing us.

"Colonel Holland, hailing us! What's he doing on an open channel?" I announced in surprise.

"Let's hear it," Carter directed.

"-are you near the southwest quadrant of the city, over? Sierra 2-5-9, if you are receiving, I am authorizing override of radio security protocols to link with this channel."

"How long for a secure link?" Carter asked.

I sighed and answered, "I can't guarantee secure anymore."

"Could the Covenant trace it to us?"

"I could." Carter took apparently took that as "yes" and nodded.

"Noble Leader, this is a Priority-one hail. If you are receiving, acknowledge immediately." I handed Carter an earpiece with

instructions to keep it short. Carter accepted, and put it to his ear. Carter answered, and Holland apparently gave him some instructions.

"We've got movement. Multiple Covenant vehicles vacating the area. And they're in a hurry," Jun said.

"How often do you see Covenant retreat for no reason?" Emile asked to no one in particular. He put away his kukri and started to stand up. I glanced down at a datapad and was immediately startled.

"Radiation flare! Big! Forty million routgens!"

"Just lost Holland, what's going on?"

"Atomic excitement scrambled the signal. Ninety million now!"

"Source?" I tapped on the datapad frantically, trying to find the source and probable epicenter of the strike.

"Airborne. _Close_."

"How close?" As Carter said that, there was a bright flash, and the entire building shook.

"_THAT CLOSE!_" _I yelled as the entire team was knocked to the ground. Wind roared through the shattered windows as a signature orange glow lit the sky on fire. I felt a hand on my arm as I was pulled to my feet. I grabbed my helmet and started running, following Six. It wasn't hard to see him, as he had white highlights on his armor.

Six held open the door of the elevator " which shut automatically " for me. As I stopped in the elevator, Six hit the down button, and I felt my stomach lurch as the elevator shifted into motion.

"First glassing?" I asked Six as we waited.

"You could say that," he said. I chuckled; only Noble Six would be making jokes during the end of New Alexandria.

"Our best option is a nuclear fallout bunker on sub-level two, ninety six meters northeast. Sir, if we have orders from Holland, we should be briefed when it's safe."

The door pinged as it opened, and the pair of us sprinted out of the elevator as fast as we could. We were only fifteen meters away from the doors, when I heard Six yell out "Kat, get down!" In that time, I had covered five meters, and five more until safety from sniper fire.

Apparently, throwing myself forwards wasn't enough for Six, as he crashed on top of me. I heard the strange half-crack, half-whine of a needle rifle, and the ping of a deflected round. The pair of us rolled and Six flung me towards the doors.

I flew through the doors and landed inside the shelter as gunfire echoed in my ears. I looked up, and saw Six pointing his assault

rifle up at a Phantom and firing away at an Elite Field Marshall. The red-armored Three walked backwards into the room as Marines yelled to close the door. The moment he was inside and the doors closed, the room was flung into darkness.

"Someone got a light?" A Marine whispered. I reached up and flicked the switch on my helmet lights, illuminating the shelter. It was spacious, but considering it was supposed to be able to hold everyone in Olympic Tower, and most had been evacuated, it wasn't surprising. Other lights flashed on as various people found their own lights.

"Alright, everyone, settle down. We'll start a two person watch, three hours per pair. Who wants to go first?" Carter asked, taking command. Carter was always the one who was cool under fire. Six volunteered as one, and I decided to keep him company. As the others turned off their lights and tried to get some rest, I switched on my night vision and found a place to sit.

Six sat down next to me, and he opened a personal comm channel to me.

"So. First glassing. How is it so far?"

"About as good as one can get." Six was silent for a minute before he answered.

"I don't if know I ever told you, but my parents were on Harvest."

"Ouch," I said, wincing even as I thought about it." I take it they didn't make it off?" Six shook his head.

"I wish they had."

"We all do."

"Sorry about tackling you. Had to be done."

"Are you kidding? I thought that was fun!" I laughed. Six chuckled as he put an arm around my shoulders, "I'm glad."

"You're crazy, you know that?" I said.

"Says the girl who thought it was fun I threw her eight meters." He had a point.

"Then that just makes us both crazy," the man retorted. I chuckled, but my momentary happiness turned to sadness as I heard the terrible roar of the plasma beams tearing New Alexandria apart. And I did something I hadn't done since TORPEDO.

I cried.

I felt Six remove my helmet and pull me closer. Thinking about how many lives were being lost despite evacuations had simply put me over the edge. That, and being closer to death than any other time in my life. Six's arms left my sides for a moment, and I heard a hiss of compressed air. For the first time in my memory, Six had removed his helmet.

"It's alright, Kat," he murmured. "I've got you." Despite myself, I just kept crying. During training, emotional conditioning was a big part, but now, I just couldn't stop. I don't know why.

As I dried my eyes of tears, I looked up at Six. It was funny how I had never noticed him during training, but I guess it was because he was so quiet. I was surprised to learn that he was actually a ginger. His hair was cut short, like the rest of the Spartans, but he was the only ginger Spartan I'd ever seen. He had a scar going across the middle of his face, but it fit him. His eyes glittered gold in the low light from a chemical light stick someone had tossed in a corner.

"You're going to be fine, Kat. If you only trust me once, then trust me now," he said, wiping away another tear. I shifted a little bit closer to Six, placing my head on his shoulder.

"You can't know that," I whispered.

"You're right. But I choose to believe," Six replied. I laid my head on his shoulder. Six wasn't lying; he never did unless absolutely necessary, and situations like that almost never happened.

"Go to sleep Kat. I'll wake you up when the watch is done," he murmured, lightly kissing my forehead.

I would always have nightmares about that night, but Six was always there for me.

* * *

><p>I hope that was okay. It's my first attempt at a romance oneshot, and I confess that I've never been great with romance stories.

Criticism is welcome! I hope you enjoyed.

~Winter

End
file.